

KAISERSLAUTERN CPAC CONNECTION



From the Director

Summer is well under way and, like hot summer days, civilian personnel is heating up. Summer Hire Program started May 27 and will end on August 5, implementation procedures for the National Security Personnel System (NSPS) are being developed and the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) list is being finalized for Presidential approval. In this edition, we will provide updates on these topics, plus we will give you valuable information on other civilian personnel issues. As always, we welcome your comments and encourage you to submit topics for future issues.

Hoorah for Summer Hires!

The 2005 Kaiserslautern Summer Hire Program is drawing to a close. The program has been a huge success! The final tally was 108 students. Thanks to managers for giving our students the opportunity to be a part of this meaningful program and thanks to the students for all their contributions.

NSPS What???

Implementation of the NSPS will result in drastic changes in civilian personnel rules and regulations for Department of Army civilians. The procedures are being developed by the Department of Defense (DoD), in cooperation with the Office of Personnel Management and the Federal labor unions and will include all new pay setting, promotion, performance appraisal, classification and discipline rules. This is a huge undertaking and as you might expect not without

complications. It was announced that the implementation date for the first group of civilians to be covered by the new rules (known as Spiral I) would not begin on July 1, 2005 as scheduled. This does not immediately impact us overseas, since we are in Spiral II. Spiral II will be scheduled only after Spiral I has been successfully implemented. Release of the final NSPS regulation is still planned for sometime this year and will be based on the draft regulation that was posted for comment in February 2005. The Federal regulations are posted online for review at: <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/pdf/05-2582.pdf>. You can also read about the system from the Army Civilian Personnel Online (CPOL) web page at: <http://cpol.army.mil/library/general/nsps/>. NSPS will be explored in more detail in future newsletters. Once we are closer to implementation, you will begin to see plenty of CPAC training announcements.

BRAC

The BRAC list is being finalized and must be sent to President Bush for approval by September 8. You are probably asking why you should be concerned with BRAC. After all, it only affects stateside installations, right? Actually, if you are nearing the end of your overseas tour or if you have reemployment rights, you should be interested. You may decline a job offer in the Priority Placement Program (PPP) at a base scheduled for closure. Also, employees with reemployment rights to a BRAC installation, may be required to register in

PPP instead of exercising rights to your old job. Be sure to ask about this when you sign up for PPP.

Speaking of Pay...

Have you ever had questions regarding taxes, debt collection, leave balances, time cards, address changes or W4 forms? Do you know who to call for help? It can be confusing and, depending on the nature of the problem, hard to understand.

Inquiries concerning personnel matters such as a name change, service computation date, grade or step, within grade increase, veteran's preference etc. should be directed to your Human Resources Assistant (HRA) at the Kaiserslautern CPAC. If you don't have the number for your servicing Assistant, call DSN 489-7262.

If the issue involves taxes, including the number of deductions on your W4, leave balances, time card errors, or changes in address, contact your Kaiserslautern Customer Service Representative at DSN 375-9766 for assistance. DeCA employees should call DSN 489-7427.

You may also go to the My Pay web site at: <https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx> to make Federal and state tax changes, change direct deposit/electronic funds transfer (EFT), allotments, savings bonds and home address. You can also view/print/save LES (26 pay periods) request a W2 and turn off hardcopy LES.

Debt collection questions are not so clear. For example, if you were given a within grade increase too early and a correction caused a debt for over payment, it is most likely a personnel matter. You should contact your HRA with questions. On the other hand, if a creditor submitted proper paper work to garnish your wages, the Kaiserslautern Customer Service Representative should be your first contact. If you aren't certain, call your HRA as a starting point.

Even before making a call, however, you should carefully review your Leave and Earning Statement (LES). This is especially true if you are a new employee or recently transferred from the states. For example, item 11 "SCD Leave" (Service Computation Date) may need to be adjusted for prior federal service, after your

Official Personal Folder (OPF) is received. Another important block on your LES is the "Leave" category. It displays how much annual leave you accrue per pay period – 4 hrs, 6 hrs, or 8 hrs – depending on your SCD. Sick leave remains constant at 4 hours per pay period. In order to transfer a prior leave balance (annual, sick, home), be sure to provide the very last LES from your previous Federal job when you in process to your new job.

Some other blocks to review carefully are the current earnings, post allowance and living quarters allowance (LQA). Post allowance is only paid if you are a full time employee. LQA, which is authorized for employees hired from the states, will also appear in the "Current Earnings" block. Both post allowance and LQA are subject to change (increase or decrease). Contact your HRA if you do not see these allowances on the first pay check after they are scheduled to begin.

Changes in Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)

If a fear of making the right investment choices has kept you from contributing to TSP, worry not. As of August 1, 2005, the lifecycle fund, known as the L Fund, will be one of the savings options available to employees. It is designed to take the guess work out of investment. You choose the year you will need the money and the investment goes on automatic pilot. The closer you get to "the" date, the less risky your investment mix automatically becomes. Check out the details at <http://www.tsp.gov>.

Federal Employee' s Group Life Insurance (FEGLI)

Reminder...The FEGLI coverage elected during the last open season in 2004 will be effective the pay period beginning **September 4, 2005**. Employees must meet the pay and duty requirements before the election will take effect. For a full-time employee, that means the employee must be in a pay and duty status for at least 32 hours. Part-time employees must be in a pay and duty status for one-half of the regularly scheduled tour of duty shown on their current **SF 50, Notification of Personnel Action**. Employees working an intermittent schedule or one that is not regularly scheduled must be in a pay and duty status for one-half of the hours customarily worked.

Employees on annual leave, sick leave, donated leave, or any other type of leave, are not in a pay and duty status for the purposes of effecting the FEGLI election.

Check your LES for the pay period beginning September 4 to make sure the correct premiums are being deducted. If they are not, contact your HRA for assistance.

New Supervisors!

Supervisory Development Training will be given at the Kaiserslautern CPAC in September 2005. Session I is September 14 and 15 and Session II is September 28 through 30. If you need help deciphering personnel rules and regulations, this training is for you! To register online, go to: http://www.chra.eur.army.mil/training/asp/sched_open.asp.

Good News for Reservists and National Guard Employees Called to Active Duty

Prior to December 21, 2000, Federal employees who were military reservists or in the National Guard were charged annual leave or leave without pay for non-workdays during some of the time they were on military duty. For instance, if an employee was on military leave from Thursday to Tuesday, the weekend days were counted against the employee's 15 calendar days of military leave. Once the 15 calendar days of leave were exhausted, some employees had to cover additional absences for military duty using annual leave or leave without pay. A court decision (*Butterbaugh v. Department of Justice*) reversed the government's interpretation of the Federal code, which changed the way military leave is administered. Non-workdays are no longer counted against the military leave entitlement.

Employees may file a claim to recover annual leave erroneously charged. Go to: <http://www.chra.eur.army.mil/> and click on "What's New" then on "Administrative Claim for Annual Leave". Detailed information and procedures for filing the claim are posted. Do not delay though. There are time limitations.

More Good News for Reservists ...

Public Law was amended in 2005 to change the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program

(FEHBP) for employees who perform military service to continue to be covered by FEHB for up to 24 months (if placed on active duty for more than 30 days). The coverage previously lasted only 18 months. The change in law also permitted DoD to pay the full cost of the coverage for 24 months. These amendments apply to employees called or ordered to active duty on or after September 14, 2001. You may be eligible for reimbursement of your share of the FEHB premiums from the September date. Go to the Civilian Human Resources Agency web page at: <http://www.chra.eur.army.mil/>. Click on the "Master Index" and then click on "F". Scroll down to "FEHB - Retroactive Payments for FEHB Premiums", all the procedures for applying are listed.

Did you Know?

☛ The Senate is about to vote on a proposed 3.1 percent Federal pay increase for General Schedule employees to be effective January 2006.

☛ Local National (LN) employees must report any on-the-job injuries or accidents that happen on duty or on the way to or from work to the supervisor immediately. Even if the accident/injury causes no or only a short-term unfitness for work, a report is important should health problems occur later. In case of a claim, the cause or circumstances must be traceable. This includes any injury requiring first aid as well as injuries for which the employee obtains medical treatment, any injury on the way to and from work and any occupational illness. If injuries require a visit to a doctor or causes unfitness for work, a LN accident report must be submitted immediately to the Safety Office of your organization.

☛ The Civilian Personnel Advisory Center is located on Pulaski Barracks, in Building 2925, Wings B and C.

☛ The CPAC conducts Executive Order and PPP briefings for departing family members who are leaving their overseas positions to PCS with their sponsors? The briefing is held the second Thursday of every month @ 9 AM in Wing C (Training Room). If there is a holiday on the scheduled Thursday, the briefing is held the next day, on Friday. Contact your HRA with questions.